TO THE

KING

AND BOTH

Houſes of Parliament,

Now ſitting at *Weſtminſter.*

BEING,

I. *A Repreſentation* of the *Cauſe* and *Sufferings* of the People, called *Quakers*, and what they deſire, ſignified.

II. *A Declaration* from the People, called *Quakers*, what they can ſay inſtead of an Oath: Together with an account of the Names of ſome of the Priſoners, called *Quakers*, in the ſeveral Goals in *England* and *Wales*, who have had the Sentence of *Premunire*, &c.

III. To the *Committee for Grievances*, ſome of the *Grievances* of the People, called *Quakers*.

IV. Some *Wholſome Advice* and *Seaſonable Conſiderations* tending to Peace and Concord: Which being tendred and delivered to ſome of the Members of each Houſe, onely in Manuſcript (with a deſire they might ſo be read among them) therefore that they may the better take notice of them; they are tendred in Print, that they may peruſe them, and conſider the *Cauſe* and *Grievous Sufferings* of the Innocent, herein hinted and partly related.

LONDON,

Printed in the Year, 1666.

A Representation *of the Cause and Sufferings of the People, called* Quakers, *and what they desire, signified.*

WEE are really a Conscientious People towards God, and as much as in us lies, we have exercised a Conscience void of Offence, both towards God and men, and we never at any time (since God made choice of us to be a peculiar People unto himself) endeavoured the disturbance of the Peace of the Government or Nation in and under which we have lived; but have behaved our selves in all good Conscience unto this day, and have followed Peace with all Men, and in all things. We have alwayes been actually conformable to the Laws of the Nation, so far as might be, without violating of our tender Consciences, and the Law of God therein. And when any thing hath been imposed upon us, which for Conscience-sake we could not actually conform unto, we have patiently conformed to suffer the penalty thereof, without any resistance, or secret seeking revenge; the Lord our God is Witness, and you your selves right well know it. Nevertheless our Sufferings and Afflictions have been multiplied upon us to this day, and our burdens added unto, by the divers Laws and Decrees which have been made against us, by which many have suffered Imprisonment unto Death, and many are Exiled, and several hundreds remain in the several Goals of this Nation at this very day, many of whom are under Sentence of Banishment, and many are *Premunired, &c.* and nothing at all hath or can be justly charged against them, but onely because they cannot for Conscience-sake towards God transgress the Commands of Christ (and the Apostle *James*) who expresly saith, *Swear not at all*: Or else, because we Meet together to Wait upon God, and to Worship him in Spirit, and in Truth, according as we are bound in Conscience, by the Spirit of the Lord to do; or else because we cannot Conform to that Worship, in which we are perswaded in our Consciences we shall not find acceptance with God, *&c.* And these are things which relate unto Conscience, and do no way tend to violate or disturb the Peace of the Kingdom; therefore we cannot but judge that your selves must confess, that we ought to have the benefit of the Kings Promises from *Breda, &c.* which hitherto we have not had nor enjoyed. And these things, ye know, we have from time to time put

you in mind of, and presented the cruelty of our manifold Sufferings unto you, to the end that you might consider thereof so as that we might be eased, and enjoy our just Rights and Liberties in the exercise of our pure Consciences in things that appertain to the Faith and Worship of God.

And now once more in the patient long-suffering Spirit of the Lamb, we do represent unto you, our present Suffering-Estate, there being now in the several Goals of this Nation, above four hundred Persons, of which number seventy eight are under the Sentence of *Premunire*, some of whom have been detained several years, because for Conscience-sake they cannot *Swear*. And neer a hundred are under the Sentence of *Transportation*, for Meeting to Worship God in Spirit; and the rest of them, which are a great number, are deteined for the Causes aforesaid, of whom several have been kept divers years; besides forty four have been Banished for Meeting, as aforesaid, not to return upon pain of Death. And two hundred have died in Prisons, and on Board the Ship, being thither sent in order to Transportation within these last five years; committed for no other cause, but as aforesaid. And by these woful Sufferings, the Spirit of the Lord, and the Souls of his People are grieved, and we are assuredly confident and perswaded, that for these things sake, the Lord hath a controversie with this Nation, and his hand is stretched out in judgement and displeasure against it; and certainly there is no way by which his hand may be stayed, and his future Judgements diverted, but by breaking these cruel Bonds of Oppression, and setting free the Oppressed out of Prison, and calling back the Banished, that they may come to their Native Land; and so all that are under Restraint, and Exilement, and in Suffering for Conscience-sake, may be freed therefrom, and may be in a capacity to provide for themselves, and their present distressed Families, and may be enabled to pay such Taxes, for the maintaining the Peace and Government of the Kingdom, as they have been alwayes ready to do, when they were in a capacity, *&c.* that so *we may all live a peaceable and quiet Life in all Godliness and Honesty.*

But if it be Objected by any, *That the Cause for which we Suffer, is not really matter of Conscience, but that through Stubbornness and Self-will we expose our selves to Suffering.* We Answer, That we know no more prevailing Argument to convince you, that its really for Conscience-sake that we Suffer, then to present to your consideration, the greatness of our Sufferings and Patience therein: for, for refusing to Swear, and Meeting together to Worship God in Spirit, we are exposed to suffer even the loss of our Estates and Liberties, yea our Lives also, as ma-

ny of us have already done; which Sufferings (Reason will judge) nothing could induce us to undergoe, were it not to keep a *Conscience void of offence towards God.*

And now seeing these our manifold & grievous Sufferings have been and still are, only for the exercise of our pure Consciences towards God in keeping the Commands of Christ Jesus our Lord, and that our Principles and Practises are peaceable, and do no way tend to the disturbance of the Peace of the Government under which we live, we hope our state will be looked upon as it is, and so taken into consideration by you; for it's no new thing that we profess & practise, but the same that we have Precept from Christ and the Apostle for, Who saith, *Swear not at all*, Mat. 5. & Jam. 5. And for which we have President from the *Primitive Christians*, many of whom have endured manifold Sufferings, as we have done, for refusing to Swear, *&c.* Which we might particularly mention, but for brevities sake shall omit at this time, as believing many of you are not ignorant thereof. And although we cannot for Conscience-sake Swear at all, yet we never denyed the equity or substance of the Law, in which it requireth the truth to be spoken, in point of Evidence or Judgement between man and man; neither did we ever refuse to give our Word to live peacebly under the King and his Government, nor have we given any real cause that the contrary should be suspected; onely we could not Swear, nor come under the Ceremony of an Oath for Conscience-sake: But if we had refused only the Oath of Allegiance, and could have Sworn in other Cases, there might have been a seeming cause of suspition concerning us, which there is none, since we refuse it in all Cases, and are known to be peaceable in our Lives and Conversations.

Therefore that which we haue desired, and do desire at this time, is, *That our Word and Testimony may be taken, and accepted of upon all occasions without an Oath*; We being willing to undergo the penalty of Perjury, in case of false Evidence, or breach of our Word, or the same that is provided for refusing the Oath of Allegiance, and Judicial Oaths; or else what Penalty Ye shall in discretion judge meet to inflict upon us; which Penalty being mentioned by the Judges or Ministers of the Law, to the Parties concerned, if any be suspected of falshood, or not to be Conscientious in their Word or Testimony, the Penalty may be binding to such, where Conscience may be suspected not to bind.

So for you to make some *Proviso* in the Law in this Case, on the behalf of them that are tender towards God, in refusing to Swear at all; and that you will be pleased to pass some *ACT*, for the releasing out of their long and grievous Imprisonments, all those who suffer upon the

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the account aforesaid (that we may once enjoy our just Rights and Liberties in the exercise of our Consciences, in the Service and Worship of God, without which this Nation cannot be truly happy or blessed) is the thing which we hereby desire of you; Which if ye are pleased to grant, will be acceptable to the Lord and his People: But if you will not grant this our reasonable Request, we are resolved in the strength of the Lord to hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering, and to continue our Obedience to our Lord and Master Christ Jesus, in that same long-suffering Spirit, by which we have been upheld throughout all tryals unto this day, and shall commit our Cause to God, who is the Judge of all the Earth, and will do right.

However our desire is, That all those in present Sufferings for these matters of Conscience, may be released from their hard and tedious Imprisonments, and so let *Israel* go free, to Serve and Worship the Lord God, as he pleaseth and requires.

From us whose Names are here subscribed, on the behalf of all the Suffering People of God aforesaid.

Amor Stodard,	*George Whitehead*,	*Gerard Roberts*,
Gilbert Laize,	*Thomas Lee*,	*Samuel Newton*,
Ellis Hooks,	*Thomas Coveny*,	*William Crouch*,
Morgan Watkins,	*John Nelson*,	*Josiah Cole*,
Walter Mires,	*Abraham Shapton*,	*Thomas Yokeley*.

A Copy of this was rendred to the High Chancellour of *England*, and another to the Speaker of the House of Commons, &c. in the ninth Month, 1660.

A De-

A Declaration from the People, called Quakers, what they can ſay inſtead of an OATH.

THe Forme of words which Chriſt hath laid downe in *Matth.* 5. and the Apoſtle *James* taught in his general Epiſtle, *Ch.* 5. we who are called *Quakers*, can ſtand by and to.

Chriſt ſaid, *Ye have heard, that it hath beene ſaid of old time, by them, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf* (which was the falſe Oath) *but perform thy Oaths to the Lord*, which was the true Oaths, which were to be taken before the Judges, Officers and Magiſtrates, to end Controverſies, and be performed to the Lord; but Chriſt ſaid, *Now I ſay unto you, Swear not at all, &c. but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay; for whatſoever is more then this, cometh of evil.* Therefore this *yea, yea*, and *nay, nay*, wherein Chriſt doubles his words, to make them of force, and ſets them over and above an Oath, we will ſtand by and to. And alſo in *James* the 5th. and 12th. the Apoſtle taught, and ſaid, *Above all things, my Brethren, Swear not; neither by Heaven, nor by Earth*, (mark) *nor by any other Oath*: But he alſo ſets up that which is above an Oath, which is Chriſt's words, *Let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay.* Which Form of ſound words the Apoſtle doubles (as Chriſt did) when he ſaid, in his repeating over Chriſts words, *Ye ſhall ſwear no Oaths, leſt ye fall into Condemnation.* Theſe are the Commands of Chriſt and the Apoſtle, which we will ſtand by, and to, (to wit) *Yea, yea*, and *Nay, nay.*

Alſo here are ſome Examples of the Primitive Chriſtians, and holy Martyrs, that kept the Commands of Chriſt, and of the Apoſtle, which ſpoke the Truth, and both denyed and gave their Teſtimony againſt Swearing: For *Policarpus* a Martyr, who was, as is ſaid, *Johns* Diſciple, and Biſhop of *Smyrna*, 89. years of Age, when he was required by the Proconſul to Swear, he denyed it, and ſaid, *He was a Chriſtian.* So it appears at that time Chriſtians did not Swear, *Acts* and *Mon. fol.* 55. *Vol.* 2. And alſo *Baſillides* Martyr, being an Officer among the Souldiers, being required to Swear before a Judge, ſaid plainly, *That it was not lawful to Swear, Lib.* 6. *cap.* 6. *pag.* 98. So it appears plainly that it was

the

the Mark of a Christian, not to *Swear*. And the *Waldenses*, whose Names are so famous amongst the Reformed Churches, and who are said immediately to succeed the Apostles, and were the most antient and true Protestants, professed it to be no way lawful for a *Christian to Swear*. And Bishop *Usher*, late of *Armath*, Primate of *Ireland*, pleaded their Cause against the Jesuites, in his Book, *De Successione, Cap.* 6.

The *Plowman* in his *Complaint*, saith, *Lord, thou gavest us a Command of truth in bidding us to say*, Yea, yea, *and* Nay, nay, *and* swear for nothing; *but Lord, he that calls himself thy Vicar on Earth, hath broken thy Commandment, for he maketh a Law, and compelleth men to Swear*, Acts *and* Mon. *Vol.* 1. *fol.* 527. *and* 585.

Here you may see how Swearing came up among Christians.

And *John Wickliffe*, whose Works are so much esteemed by the Protestants, his judgment was, *That all Oaths, which be made for any Contract or Civil Bargaine betwixt man and man, be unlawful.* And *John Hus* and *Jerome* of *Prague*, were burnt [for holding his Opinion] by the Papists, *fol.* 653.

And *Walter Brute*, who was a Teacher of Gods People, saith concerning Swearing, *I believe and obey the Doctrine of Almighty God, and my Master Christ Jesus, which teacheth, That Christian men in affirming the Truth, should pass the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees of the Old Testament, or else he excludes them from the Kingdom of Heaven*; for he saith, *Except your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And as concerning Oaths, he saith, *It hath been said, by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thy self, but perform thy Oaths to the Lord: But I say to you now, Swear not at all, but let your Yea, be yea, and Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, comes of evil. And therefore as the perfection of the Antient men in the Old Testament was, not to forswear themselves, so the perfection of Christian men is, not to Swear at all, because they are so commanded of Christ, whose Command in no Case must be broken.*

Origen saith, *It behoves a man who lives according to the Gospel, not to Swear at all.* And *Jerome*, an Antient Father and Teacher of the Church, which the Protestants own, saith, *That the great Evangelical sincerity and truth, admits not of an Oath, since every true saying is equivalent thereunto.*

Theophilact, an Antient Father of the Church, whom the Protestants owns, saith, upon *Mat.* 5. concerning Oaths, *Learn hence that under the Law, it was no evil for one to Swear, but since the coming of Christ, it is evil, as is Circumcision.* And was it not the principal solution given by *Ambrose*, *That a Christian should not Swear at all.*

And

And Bishop *Gauden* saith, *A true Christians Oath is needless, and an evil mans Oath is worthy of no more credit than a Lyar*, page 17. and 41. of his Book concerning *Swearing*.

Otho, Bishop of *Bambergenses* in *Germany*, and *Basilius* of *Calcedon*, refused to Swear; and afterwards there was an Act granted to tender Christians, that their *Yea*, and *Nay*, might be taken, to testifie the Truth instead of an Oath: And likewise you may see more Examples, for the *Essenns* amongst the *Jews* refused to Swear, as *Josephus* witnesseth. Likewise *Basil* commends *Chinas*, a famous *Greek*, who suffered a Fine of three Talents, rather then he would save it by Swearing to the loss of his Honour. And also many in Queen *Mary's* dayes suffered Martyrdom, that refused to Swear, as you may read in the *Acts* and *Monuments*. And also another Example you may see, *Mat.* 18. 17. where Christ saith in the Gospel-times to the Church, *That by the mouth of two or three Witnesses, every Word may be established*: And this Christ spake in matter of differences that might happen among Christians; but said nothing of an Oath, for Oaths he forbad before. And the Apostle taught, *That every man should speak the truth to his Neighbour*; not that they should Swear the Truth; and also tells the Christian Church, *That in the mouth of two or three Witnesses, every word should be established*; and not in the mouth of two or three Swearers, 2 *Cor.* 13. 1. So here you may see that it is no new thing to deny Swearing, for Christ, and the Apostles, and the Antient Fathers, and the holy Martyrs, testified against it and denyed it.

And we cannot give forth a better form of words to testifie the Truth, than that which Christ hath laid down, which is, *Yea, yea*, and *Nay, nay*, which the Apostles, and the Fathers, and the Martyrs, Preached, and Practised, and suffered for; and if we, when we are called to any Office, or upon a Jury, or to beat Witness, do break our *Yea, yea*, or our *Nay, nay*, which is Christ's Form of sound Words, and which the Apostles Preached, and the Martyrs Suffered for, which we stand to and by; then let us suffer the same Penalty as they that can Swear and break their Oaths. For all Oaths, Vows, Promises, Types, Shadows, and Figures, which were among the Jews, Christ ends, and sets up *Yea, yea*, and *Nay, nay*, above them, which we shall stand by and to, who are Peaceable, and have never forfeited our Liberty; and do owe nothing but Peace and good Will towards the King, and all Men, and desire all mens good and prosperity in the Everlasting Life.

An account of the Names of some of the Prisoners, called Quakers, *in the several Goals in* England *and* Wales, *who have had the Sentence of* Premunire *past against them, because for Conscience-sake they could not Swear. And some have had their Estates, and Goods, and Cattel taken away. Also the time how long they have lain in Prison.*

Oxf. sh. { *Will. Pettifer,* / *Hen. Philipps.* } Both *Premunired*, and one of them hath remained in Prison, three Years and ten Months, and the other two Years and upwards.

Warwick sh.	*Tho. Goodayre,*	*Tho. Field,*	*Joh. Carpenter,*
	Tho. Cooke,	*Will. Demsbury,*	*James Wagstaff,*
	Rich. Fields,	*Will. Beventon,*	*Will. Lucas,*
	Will. Parr,	*Jacob Gibbs,*	*Mary Cooper,*
	Hen. Jackson,	*Paul Newman,*	*Mary Page,*

These without any legal Tryal, or any Sentence, or Judgement past against them, in the open Court or Sessions, were entred into the Callender, to remain Prisoners during their Lives, where they have been detained, some of them five years, and the rest two years and ten months. *Mary Page* died a Prisoner.

Lancashire. { *Margaret Fell.* } Premunired, and hath remained in a cold, smoky, bad Prison near three Years.

Westmorland. { *Franc. Howgil,* } Premunired, and hath remained in Prison three Years.

Linc. sh. { *John Williamson,* / *Ralph Harebottle,* } Both Sentenced for refusing to Swear, and have remained in Prison near three Years.

Sussex.	*John Ellis.*	*Thomas Avery,*	*Steph. Eager,*
	John Wenham,	*John Martin,*	*Ambr. Rigge,*
	Richard Serase,	*Moses French,*	*Will. Gearsing.*
	Walter Serase,	*Nich. Beard,*	

All Prisoners upon a *Premunire*; some of which have remained Prisoners there above four Years, though they were proceeded against contrary to Law and Equity.

Norfolk	*Edw. Shooter,*	*Jos. Whitworth,*	*Jos. Townsend,*
	Rob. Turner,	*John Yokesley,*	*Anth. Preston,*
	Tho. Walter,	*Ben. Townsend,*	*John Heselwood.*

These had a false Inditement drawn against them, to which they refused to plead; because they had a Sentence of *Premunire* past against them.

Worcester. { *Robert Smith,* / *Richard Payton,* } Both *Premunired*, and have been Prisoners about four years.

Stafford. { *Thomas Taylor.* } *Premunired*, and hath been Prisoner about four years.

Bishoprick, { *Jam. Langstaffe.* } Hath remained in Prison above four years.

Berk sh.

George Lambel,	*Will. Yeate,*	*Will. Lambel,*
Leonard Key,	*John Payne,*	*Thomas Tudway,*
Joseph Cole,	*James Lavel,*	*Will. Thompson,*
Leonard Cole,	*Walt. Emerton,*	*Anth. Sadler,*
Benjam. Cole,	*Tho. Bartlet,*	*Rich. Green,*
Tho. Curtis,	*John Boult,*	*Jam. Marlow,*
Robert Peacock,	*Thomas Speed,*	*John True.*

These 21. Persons had the Sentence of *Premunire* past against them, in the month, and were most of them Prisoners about two years before.

Northampton. { *Thomas Dent,* / *George Eire.* } Have been *Premunired* one year and a half, and still remain Prisoners.

Cumberland. { *Thomas Stordy,* and *Stephen Pearson.* } Both had the Sentence of *Premunire* past upon them, and have remained Prisoners about four years.

Dorset sh.

John Pitman,	*Charles Noak,*	*Francis Bowne,*
William Scot,	*Angel Smith,*	*Andr. Downton.*

All *Premunired*, and have been Prisoners 3. years, and about 7. months.

Somerset sh.

	Imprisoned, the	day.	mo.	year
Thomas Budd,				
John Collins,		2	12	61
John Adams,		26	5	62
Mat. Perrin,				
William Roach,				
John Dewbury,		27	5	62
Rice Morice,				
George Clapp,				
Nath. Parke,				
John Evans,		died prisoner		
Joseph Pearce,		30	5	62
John Cary,				
Giles Brook,		3	6	62
Amos Parsons,			6	62
Henry Turner,		7	6	62
Wm. Lambert,			9	62

All these had the Sentence of *Premunire* past upon them, most of them being very poor men, several of whom having great charges of Children, and Families, and little else to maintain them but their daily labour; and the Goaler was strictly charged that he should keep them close Prisoners, and not suffer them to work in the Goal, nor suffer their Friends to relieve them.

Mr. Raymond 28-7-62

Montgomery sh.	*Will. Lewis,*	*Kath. Evans,*	*Charles Lloyd,*	*An. Laurence,*
	Marg. Lewis,	*Rich. Davis,*	*Cad. Edwards,*	*Sarah Wilson.*
	Edw. Evans,	*Hugh Davis,*	*Hum. Wilson,*	

All committed to Prison for refusing to Swear, and Sentenced to remain still Prisoners in *Welsh-Pool*.

Carmarthen. *James Picton,* *Premunired*, and kept a Prisoner several years in *Carmarthen* Castle.

And besides these before mentioned, there are at this time 341. Prisoners in Prison, in several Goals in *England*, for Meeting together to Worship God, and for denying to Swear, and for other Causes relating to Conscience; and two hundred have died in Prisons, and on bord the Ship, being thither sent to be Transported, within these last five years, for the Causes aforesaid, being crowded by great numbers into close, stinking, smoky, cold, unwholsome places, where many have perished and lost their Lives.

So these things we lay before you, in the Fear and Wisdom of God to consider of them, and to set the Innocent and Oppressed at Liberty, from under their cruel Bondage and Oppression.

To the Committee for Grievances.

Here are some of the Grievances of the People of God, called QUAKERS, *laid before You to consider of.*

FIrst, Many of them are almost spoiled and ruined in their Persons and Estates, and all is for keeping a good Conscience towards God, though we have the Word of a King, that none shall be called in question for matters of Religion so long as they live Peaceably: And we have not forfeited our Liberty, and yet many are made Fatherless and Widows; some by Banishment (Husband from Wife and Children) from their Countries native soil into Forreign parts, who are exposed to much hardness.

And many by long and cruel hard Imprisonments, under cruel Goalers, have died in Prison, since the King came in, to the number of 200.

And many lie now in Prison, to the number of 400, one hundred of which are under Sentence of Transportation.

And many are *Premunired*, and to be kept in Prison during the Kings pleasure, to the number of seventy and eight Persons.

Oh what a Cry here is of the Fatherless and Widows, and of the Afflicted and Oppressed, which surely is (and will be) entred into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath.

And many are Excommunicated and cast into Prison by the Bishops, who never sent their Priests to exhort, nor teach, nor instruct them.

And you know the Bishops left us about twenty years ago, and left us to *Independants*, and *Presbyterians*, and others, who did persecute us because we could not joyn to them and their Principles, and cast many into Prisons, some to Death; and spoiled our Goods, and made havock of our Persons, as you know well enough; whom the Lord did overturn.

And now you know this late Act, which was made for those who meet to plot and contrive mischief, and hold dangerous Principles, and to raise Insurrections against the King; by which not above the number of five may meet, which (such a number) may do more mischief then a hundred; for they may speak one to another that which they would not speak to a multitude. But the People of God, called *Quakers*, are not such persons as the Act is grounded upon, which we believe you do know in your Consciences, though many have been Banished, and many hundreds Imprisoned, and some to Death, and their Goods spoiled, and all this for meeting together to Worship God, who are peaceable towards the King, and all men, and desire nothing but their everlasting good.

And also the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, which were made in King *James* his dayes, about the time of the Gunpowder-Plot, wherein the *Papists* would have blown up the King and Parliament: These Oaths are put to us as a snare, because they know we cannot Swear at all, in obedience to the Command of Christ, *Mat.* 5. and *Jam.* 5. through which many have been cast into Prison, and *Premunired*, and kept in such places where you would not keep your Horses and Dogs. And though we have often proffered, and do still proffer unto you, That if we break our *Yea, yea*, and *Nay, nay*, which was Christ's and the Apostles Doctrine and Command, who denyed Oaths, whose Command we can no wayes break; then let us suffer as they that break their Oaths, and as perjured persons. For you know what Estate the Country stands in now, and how it stands with Husband-men and Farmers, and Labouring-men; the scarceness of mony with them to pay their Rents, Taxes, and Assessments, and therefore how can men pay their Rents, Taxes, and Assessments, and maintain their Families, who are cast into Prison (industrious men) for the Worshipping of God, and keeping the Commands of Christ, some four or five years together. And besides the Act against *Quakers*, though they cast them into Prison by the Act, yet they spoil their Goods besides, as many may be in-

And also the Bishops and Clergy have cast many into Prisons, and keep many in Prisons, yea several to Death, through which they have made many Widows and Fatherless: And although they have cast them into Prisons, yet spoil their Goods besides, to the value of double and treble, yea (sometimes) ten times the value of what was first demanded; driving away their Cows and Horses, and taking their houshold Goods, to the ruining of many Families, and oppressing many Widows and Fatherless, as many Goals do testify. And these have not been Christian acts of Charity, nor fruits of the Ministry of the Gospel; for the Apostle saith, *A Bishop must not be given to filthy lucre, or covetous, nor a striker: For he coveted no mans Silver, Gold, nor Apparel, that he might be an example to all that followed him.*

And these things we thought meet to lay before the Committee, which are to hear and redress the Grievances, that you might consider them in the Wisdom of God, and present them to the Parliament, that some speedy course may be taken for the easing and relieving of the Innocent and Oppressed, of their heavy Burdens, and grievous Oppressions, which they have long and do still groan under.

From the People of God, called Quakers, *which owe nothing but Love, Peace, and Good-Will to you all.*

To the *King* & both *Houses* of *Parliament*.

A Declaration, wherein is some wholsome Advice, and seasonable Considerations, tending to Peace and Concord; from the People called Quakers.

Forasmuch as we are perswaded, that many of you by that knowledge and experience which ye have of our Principles and Practices, are satisfied that we are an Innocent and Harmless People, & of peaceable dispositon, why should we be exposed to utter Ruine and Destruction, by penal Laws, some of which Ye have made, and all which Ye have power to abrogate, and in Justice you may and ought to do it; because they punish us for keeping our Consciences void of Offence towards God, whereby we neither can nor do injure any man.

1. For first, It is not any dishonour to the King, that we fear God, and dare not break any of his Commands, but rather an honour and security to

him, and an ease to Government: Because the Fear of God, and that respect we have to his Laws, keeps us from devising or working wickedness against the King or any Man.

2. It cannot be prejudicial to Government, nor to the Governed, that we meet together peaceably (as we have used to do) to worship God in Spirit and in Truth, as we are perswaded in our own minds we ought to do, according to the Example of the Primitive Church, because *every one of us must give account to God for himself. Let us therefore not judge one another*, saith the Apostle, *but rather judge this, not to put a stumbling block, nor occasion to fall in one anothers way*, Rom. 14. 12, 13.

3. It is not destructive to Government, nor to the Governed, that we cannot receive for Doctrine the Commandments of Men, nor worship according to their Traditions and Prescriptions, which occasioned us to suffer by the former Powers; For Christ said, *Mat. 9. Such worship in vain.* And such as do worship in a wrong way (not compelling others thereto) hurt onely themselves; *Because every one shall receive a Reward according to his own Works, whether good or evil*, Rev. 22. 12. And forasmuch as the Apostle said, *Rom. 14. 23. That whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin*; no man by outward Law should be compelled to practise what he believes he ought not, nor restrained from what he is perswaded he ought to do, except his Faith or Perswasion tend to the outward hurt or destruction of others, which ours doth not. For we believe Christs Doctrine, and are perswaded to do to all men, as we would be done by.

Objection. But some do Object, and say to us, *You believe and are perswaded that ye ought not to swear in any Case, and that makes you inconsistent with Government, and may be hurtful and destructive to others besides your selves. For by our Law, without an Oath no Magistrate can be made, nor Justice done; because thereby the Truth and Falsehood in Cases is tried out.*

Answer. To which we thus answer: That if the end of administring an Oath to Magistrates, Officers, Jurors, and Witnesses, be to make them do justly in their places, and speak the Truth, Then we both can and shall answer the end for which an Oath is administred, without an Oath, according to the form of sound words which Christ hath laid down, which is, *Yea, yea*, and *Nay, nay*; for in our Hearts God hath placed his fear, which brings us to obey Christs Command, and we are sensible that he is a present Witness of all our Actions and Words, and by him that takes away sin, unbeliefs and strife, which are the occasions of Oaths, we are bound to speak the Truth, and to do justly in our Places, according to every righteous Law, which they that know us, are satisfied in, and can witness: Therefore forasmuch as ye, as well as we, do call Christ Lord, who hath said, *Swear not at all, &c. but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay: for whatsoever is more, cometh of Evil*, Mat. 5. 34, &c. let us suffer no more for keeping his Pre-

cepts, but make a Law, that our *Yea*, *yea*, and *Nay*, *nay*, which are the words of Christ and the true Christians in the Primitive times, *Jam.* 5. 12. may be taken without an Oath; and if we do unjustly in any Place or Office that we are capable of, or in trying of Causes, or if we speak falsly when in the presence of Authority we are called to evidence the Truth, and break out *Yea* and *Nay*; then let us suffer the same punishment as they do that do forswear themselves; so may Christs Doctrine be obeyed, and the Truth in all cases tried out, and no man wronged, but Justice may be done. So shall we appear to be consistent with Government: forasmuch as our Lives answer the main ends thereof, we ought not to be ruined and destroyed, as hitherto we have been, by long and tedious Imprisonments, and some till Death; by Fines, and by spoiling of our Goods, and by Exile and Banishment, and other things of like nature, which would make a Volumn to rehearse, that have been inflicted upon us, for not conforming to the National Worship, and for meeting together to worship God in Spirit and in Truth, as he requires us; and for obeying the Doctrine of Christ, in refusing to swear. And now you being the Legislative Power of the Nation, to whom it belongs to redress these and the like Grievances, we propose these things to your serious considerations.

First, Whether Persecution for difference in Religion and Worship, with the many Injuries, Wrongs and Oppressions, that hath together with it, been inflicted upon innocent harmless People, fearing God, be not one cause of the heavy Judgments of God that are come upon the Land? And if so, Whether it behoves you not to put a stop to Persecution, by making void and of none effect those Laws which have been made, tending to uphold onely one sort of Religion and Worshippers, and to ruine and destroy all such as dissent from them, though they may be as near the Truth, and as tender to God as the other, for any thing that the Law-makers know, who pretend not to infallibility of Judgement in things that are Divine.

Secondly, Consider that if you do take away all such Laws as do tend to force a Uniformity in Worship, amongst Persons that are not in Unity, and do give free Liberty to every man to worship God, as in Conscience he is perswaded, and believes he ought to do; then you will ease the Magistrates of a great deal of burthen and fruitless trouble that now is put upon them; whereby you may purchase to your selves great Renown, and settle the Nation in Peace and Tranquility, and give satisfaction unto all People, except those that are of a selfish spirit, and so byassed by Interest, that they are not willing to do unto others as they would be done unto; nor to allow that Liberty to others which they would have allowed to themselves, casting the Law of Christ behind their backs.

Thirdly, Consider, Whether it be safe and consistent with common good, to gratifie those which are so selfish, and byassed by their own Interest, that

they will not do unto others as they would have others do unto them, and thereby disoblige all the rest, who are as free born, and as good Subjects as themselves, and have more pious and noble minds, than to think that Error is like to prevail against the Truth of the Gospel, which by its own power hath prevailed against both Error and Heathenism, without Magistrates force, and so it shall ever do; for we believe the sentence of the *wise Man*, who said, *That Truth is strongest of all.*

Fourthly, Consider, That the greatest part of People in this Nation, that are above the age of sixteen years, upon whom Conformity is imposed, were not educated in the Religion and Worship set down in the Liturgy, but in other different Worships and Religions, and that some of them by such Ministers as did then, and do now, many of them, Conform for their own ends, and are joyned with those High-Priests, which put on the Civil Magistrates to drive those, which if they were true Shepherds, they should gently lead, and not put the Magistrate (who of right is their Superiour) to do the executive part, which is the most drudging part of Persecution, which they account themselves too sacred to do. But how hardly men are driven from that Religion wherein they have been educated, unto another, without something be offered which is of a convincing and satisfactory nature, ye your selves may judge.

Fifthly, Consider, That Uniformity in Religion and Worship, were it of absolute necessity to the well-being of the Nation, is not to be attained unto by outward force, for that reaches not the Conscience, nor alters the Understanding nor the Opinions of Men, which are as different as the Stars in their Courses: And ye cannot by a Law make them all of one nature and magnitude, neither is it necessary; forasmuch as they declare the Wisdom and Power of God as they are. So read in the Book of the Creatures, and Wisdom will teach you, That the Flowers of the Field, though they differ in Colour, Smell, and Vertue, may grow well enough together upon the Earth: Even so may the Inhabitants of this Nation dwell peaceably together in it, though they differ as much in Judgement and Practice in matters of Religion; especially if you make and establish a firm Decree, that they shall not impose any thing of that nature one upon another, but by a perswasive spiritual Power.

Sixthly, Consider, Is it not a sad thing, and contrary to the Law of Equity, which teacheth every man to do as he would be done unto, that so great a number of Families, as meerly for Conscience-sake cannot Conform, should be ruined and destroyed by Fines, and spoiling of their Goods, and that so many Widows and Fatherless should be made by long and cruel Imprisonment until Death, and by Banishment, as have been already, and are like to be, if remedy be not provided. O consider what decay of Husbandry and Trade, and what Weakness and Calamity it will bring in and

upon this Nation; and what advantage it will be to Forreigners, if ye do suffer to be ruined, and destroyed by Fines, by tedious Imprisonments, and by Banishment, so many thousands of the laborious and industrious Inhabitants of this Land, as dare *not forsake the assembling of themselves together, to worship God in Spirit and in Truth*, according to the Apostles Doctrine, nor conform to the National Worship, nor take an Oath: for which cause we have suffered much, and can say, from the bottom of our hearts, *The Lord forgive them that have been the cause of it.* But upon these Considerations, and many other that might be offered, but for brevity-sake, We Desire and Advise you, to put a stop to Persecution, and let not any more be Fined, nor Imprisoned, nor Banished, nor otherwise destroyed, for the exercises of their Consciences towards God, whilst they are void of offence towards men; nor for different practices of Religion. But let the Prison-Doors be opened, and the Oppressed go free, and call home the Banished; that Mothers may rejoyce in their Children, and Wives in their Husbands, and one Brother and near Relation in another, that we all that are Inhabitants in this Nation, may live together as a Family, in the Peace and Love of God: So may he be intreated to turn his Wrath away from this Land, and to shower down Blessings upon us.

Our Principle is, To bring all into a Peaceable Life, out of those things that are evil; that the Law of God, and every Law of Man that is grounded upon Reason and Equity, takes hold upon; and therein we are one with Justice. Therefore distinguish between those whose Principles lead to Violence, or other Evils that the Law of God (and of Man, which is equal) takes hold upon, and us, who are one with Justice, and led from those things into a Peaceable Life, as much as in us lies, with all men, which is according to the practice of the *Primitive Christians*.

John Whitehead.
Alexander Parker.
Leonard Fell.

A Post-

A Post-script.

Oh Friends!

LET none be Persecuted about Church-Religion, or Worship, or matter of Conscience towards God; for that was not the way of the Apostles: If they went into everlasting Punishment that did not visit Christ in Prison, in his Members, what will become of them that cast him into Prison where he is made manifest? *For the Kingdom of God stands not in Meats, nor Drinks, nor Dayes*, nor Holy-dayes, nor eating Fish on some dayes, and Flesh on other dayes, nor White-Coats, nor Black-Coats, Tippets and Hoods, nor outward Stone and Wooden Crosses, nor outward things; but in *Power, Righteousness, Faith, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.* Oh let not Christians Persecute one another about such things *which the Kingdom of God stands not in:* And them that call themselves Ministers and Bishops, which have gotten themselves great Benefices, and Bishopricks, who persecute Innocent People which cannot give them maintenance to put into their mouths; who knows this was not the way of the Apostles, who freely received, and freely gave; nor of the Prophets, who said, *All that thirst, come freely, without money and without price*; not like *Job*, in the 28 *Chapter*, who said, *Wisdom would not be purchased for gold nor silver; but the Fear of the Lord was the beginning of it.* And is it not a hard thing that Christians should be forced to Swear in the Gospel-times, when as in the Gospel-times among Christians, it was the Command of Christ and the Apostles not to Swear, but the Truth should be established in the mouth of two or three Witnesses, in the Gospel-times, according to Christ & the Apostles. And so remember Christs words, who said, *They did not know what Spirit they were of, that persecuted and destroyed mens Lives about Religion*; and so therefore, come into that mind of Christ, who said, *He came not to destroy mens Lives*, &c. And you know that no man will trust his Body or his Spirit with them that do not know *what Spirit they be of themselves.* And remember the wicked Servant, after his Lord had forgiven him his Debt, he took his Fellow-servant by the Throat, and said, *Pay that thou owest me*; *and took him and cast him into Prison*; Did not the Lord say to this Servant, *Thou oughtest to have forgiven thy Fellow-Servant?* So are not you all Fellow-Servants? and ought not you to forgive one another? and did he not *take him* (that did not forgive his Fel-

low-servant) *and cast him into Prison, till he had paid him the utmost Farthing?* And doth not Christ say, *So ought men to forgive one another as they would be forgiven?* And how can you say the Lords Prayer, *Forgive us our Trespasses, as we forgive them their Trespass against us?* And so here, Are any of you forgiven that do not forgive? *Where is Faith that works by Love?* Was not all the Prophets and Apostles persecuted, and called *Fools*, and *Babblers*, and *Madmen*, and *Deceivers*, by the publick Professors of those times? and will not he *that is born of the Flesh, persecute him that is born of the Spirit?* And was it not, and is it not, *Adams* first-birth, *Cain*, that persecuted the second-birth? And, *They that live Godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer Persecution.* And you know it was not the work of the Apostles to Convert People by Swords and Goals, to make them bend to their Religion; this was not the Weapons they converted withal; this makes but Hypocrites, which will bow to save their Estates and Liberty. Doth not the Apostle say, *what is not of Faith is Sin*, and so to bring People to act against their Conscience (for is not that the Throne of God?) and against their Faith, is it not *that*, that brings them to sin? So where is *Long-suffering*, where is *Tenderness*, where is *Compassion*, where is the *Practice of the Apostles, who stopped the mouths of Gainsayers; who coveted no mans Gold, nor Silver, nor Apparel, that they might be Examples to all that followed them?* How is this Example lost amongst the Bishops and Priests, that take the Gold, and Silver, and Apparel of such people that they do not preach to? This is not *Glad-tydings*, nor *the Gospel of Peace*, to cast people into Prison for Means and Maintenance, and there keeping them till Death, which makes many Widows and Fatherless; this was neither the Prophets, nor Apostles, nor Christs practice, as you may read throughout the Scriptures: for the Power and the Spirit People have left, which the Apostles were in: therefore they are gone into Heaps, and are not in the Unity and Fellowship of the Spirit; which Spirit and Power the Apostles were in, God is bringing his People into, through which they cannot yeeld, to that that is got up since the Apostles dayes. Oh therefore mind that Power and Spirit that you may come into the Love of God, which fulfills the Law of Christ: for Love edifies the People, and builds them up, which for want of this Love, People tear one another to pieces, and cannot build up one another, nor edifie one another; and there is such a hatred got up in people in Christendom, that they can hardly hear one another speak of the things of God: so this shews, that they want both Love and Reverence to God and his things, which should be otherwise.

THE END.